

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001479

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PREF](#) [NP](#) [GON](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: HOME MINISTER KHADKA ON MAOISTS, REFUGEES, IRAQ

REF: A. KATHMANDU 1422

[B.](#) STATE 153894

[C.](#) KATHMANDU 1443

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty; Reasons 1.4 (a,b,d).

[¶1.](#) (S) Summary. Nepal's Home Minister Khadka discussed the role of the Nepal Police in the Government of Nepal's counter-insurgency effort as well as Tibetan and Bhutanese refugee issues with Ambassador Moriarty on July 27. Khadka suggested he was supportive of the idea of Nepal supplying troops to protect the UN in Iraq, but was concerned about reactions by political parties not currently in the government. End Summary.

Counter-Insurgency Efforts and Domestic Politics

[¶2.](#) (C) Newly-appointed Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadka told the Ambassador during a meeting on July 27 that he was grateful for USG support for Nepal's counter-insurgency effort. Without the U.S. support, Khadka intimated, the Maoists could not be defeated (biographical information of Khadka conveyed Ref A). Drawing parallels between the U.S. war on terrorism and Nepal's internal struggle, he noted the hardships the Maoist insurgency had inflicted on the people of Nepal. The Maoists' strength needed to be curtailed in order to bring the insurgents back to the negotiating table and to enable the country to restart the democratic process.

[¶3.](#) (C) The Ambassador inquired into the role of Nepal's Armed Police Force and civilian police force, both of which fall under the authority of the Home Ministry, in combating the insurgency. (NOTE: The Armed Police Force is a paramilitary force. Only about one-third of the civilian police carry arms. END NOTE.) The Minister explained the GON's desire for Nepal's police forces to take over certain functions from the Royal Nepal Army (RNA), including physical protection of sensitive installations, such as radio towers. However, the Nepal Police were too inadequately trained and too poorly equipped (according to Khadka, the police primarily carry aging .303 rifles) to increase their counter-insurgency responsibilities. The Minister beseeched the Ambassador to provide U.S. assistance in the form of training and equipment to Nepal's police. The Ambassador sympathized, but explained the legal hurdles to providing lethal assistance to civilian police forces.

Refugee Issues

[¶4.](#) (C) Turning to refugees, Ambassador Moriarty raised the need for the GON to issue travel documents to refugees who were eligible for U.S. immigration benefits. In 2003, the Nepali cabinet had approved issuance of travel documents to over 100 refugees who were entitled to immigrant status to the U.S. Now, another list of roughly 120 refugees would soon require GON review and approval. The Ambassador requested Khadka's assistance on this issue, suggesting the Cabinet consider adopting a procedure for the issuance of travel documents in such cases that would not require individual approval.

[¶5.](#) (C) The U.S. was encouraging the Government of India (GOI) to help seek a resolution for the repatriation of over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees residing in seven camps in Eastern Nepal, the Ambassador noted. It appeared that the GOI was taking more interest in the issue, and worried that the situation in the camps might become a destabilizing influence in the region. Khadka agreed that GOI involvement would be critical to move the issue forward. Meanwhile, the GON and Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) were discussing revisions to the GON report on the 22 December 2003 incident in Khudunabari Camp. The Minister was optimistic that the next bilateral meeting would lead to progress on the repatriation of refugees to Bhutan.

[¶6.](#) (C) The Ambassador also emphasized the need for the GON to continue to abide by its refugee policy issued in August 2003 upholding the principle of non-refoulement and providing UNHCR access to all asylum seekers. He expressed concern

that local officials in districts along the Nepal-China border were unaware of the GON's policy. Khadka was noncommittal, but agreed to discuss the issue further with the Foreign Ministry.

Troops for U.N. Protection in Iraq

17. (S) The Ambassador emphasized the need for international support to provide force protection to the UN Mission in Iraq, and asked whether the GON would supply troops (Ref B). As the Deputy Prime Minister had done (Ref C), Khadka did not respond directly. Instead, he noted that the government's response to the request would have to come from the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, he worried that the position of the Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) might complicate the issue. (Note: CPN-UML, essentially transforming itself into a European-style social democrat party, is the largest and arguably the most popular party in Nepal. The Ambassador plans to raise the issue at the earliest opportunity with CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal. End Note.)

Comment

18. (C) Khadka's perspective on the Maoist insurgency, that the government must first degrade the Maoists' military strength before restarting peace talks, is similar to that of his Prime Minister and Nepali Congress-Democratic party leader Sher Bahadur Deuba. Meanwhile, Khadka's care in responding to questions on refugee issues, particularly Tibetan refugee issues, reflects Nepal's need to walk a tightrope in balancing its relations with China and with the West. End Comment.

MORIARTY